



\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\*

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Government and Media Relations

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## The Washington State Patrol Announces New Hit-and-Run Alert

Olympia, Wash. - The Washington State Patrol (WSP) announced today that the state's new Hit-and-Run Alert system will begin operations on Tuesday Aug. 1, 2023. Authorized by the state Legislature earlier this year, the Hit and Run Alert system is a program of cooperation among state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies, along with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to enhance the ability to identify and recover a fleeing vehicle involved in a serious injury or fatality hit-and-run collision.

"Last year, our state saw over 300 hit-and-run collisions resulting in serious injury or death. In many of those situations, information about the fleeing vehicle was available that, if widely disseminated, might have helped us find a dangerous driver," said WSP Chief John R. Batiste. "We are working with our partners in law enforcement across the state and in highway safety at WSDOT to get the word out about these often devastating crimes."

For a Hit-and-Run Alert to be activated, the following criterion would need to be met:

- A hit-and-run collision resulting in serious injury or death.
- Enough descriptive information is available to assist in locating the suspect vehicle (i.e. a full or partial license plate, a description of the vehicle and any possible damage, location and direction of travel, etc.
- The incident has been reported and is being investigated by a law enforcement agency.

Alerts will be sent out to the media as well as to those who sign up to receive them electronically. Local law enforcement public information officers will also post them on social media. If there is enough identifying information regarding the fleeing vehicle to be helpful for the traveling public, WSDOT will use their electronic highway Variable Message Signs and Highway Advisory Radio systems in specific locales to aid in identifying a dangerous vehicle.

"If you see or hear the alert and then see what you think might be the suspect vehicle, call 911 and report your location," said Chief Batiste. "DO NOT ENGAGE with the vehicle or driver under any circumstances. Let our troopers and our fine local law enforcement officers do their jobs in safely and professionally contacting suspect vehicles," the Chief emphasized. "Let's all do our part to keep the roadways and one another safer."

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